

ALLIED HEALTH JOB VACANCY TRACKING REPORT

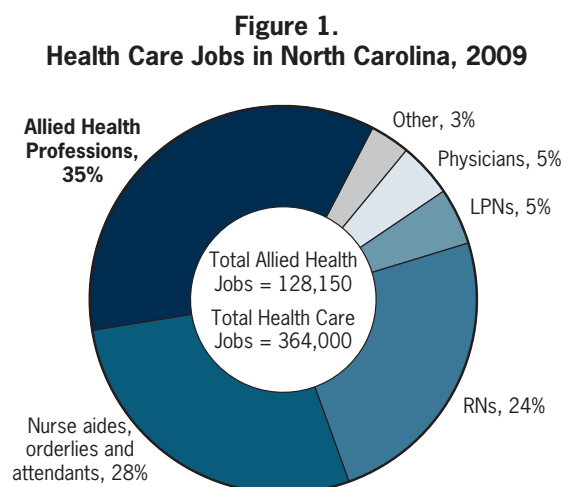
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Introduction

Allied health professionals comprise the largest proportion of the health care workforce in North Carolina (**Figure 1**), yet there is limited information regarding their demand throughout the state. The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, in collaboration with the Council for Allied Health in North Carolina and the North Carolina AHEC Program, seeks to fill this gap by conducting bi-annual studies that track allied health job vacancies in the state. This report highlights the results of the latest study with the aim of informing the work of policy makers, employers, educators, and practitioners to ensure an adequate supply and distribution of allied health professionals in North Carolina.

The allied health job vacancy study estimates workforce demand for selected health professionals in North Carolina by tracking job vacancy advertisements both in online and print sources. Although there are multiple factors that could signal a shortage including rising salaries, longer waiting times, an increase in the number of days to fill a position, and high recruitment costs, the number of vacancies advertised is one indicator of whether a profession is facing increased demand. The work described in this report reflects tracking that was conducted in Fall 2010 and is a continuation of three previous reports published in May 2006, August 2006, and April 2007.

The definition of who falls into the “allied health professional” category continues to be the topic of debate. For the purposes of this report, an exclusionary definition is used that defines allied health professionals as all health professionals with the exception of physicians, nurses, chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, and podiatrists. Even without the inclusion of nurse aides, orderlies and attendants, the most current data available show that the allied health workforce comprises approximately 35% of total health care employment in North Carolina (**Figure 1**). What is equally compelling about the need to focus on the allied health workforce is its ability to grow despite the economic downturn. In contrast to the small rate of growth seen in overall employment in North Carolina since 1999 (2.5%), the health care sector has experienced marked expansion (46% growth). Even more resilient to the worsening



Note: "Other" healthcare occupations include chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, pharmacists and podiatrists.
Source: North Carolina Health Professions Data System with data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (2009). URL: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/>.

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